ACTIVIST GUIDE: DEMAND A GLOBAL ARMS TRADE TREATY NOW!

What’s Happening!

Each year, the global trade in conventional arms carries an enormous human cost. Serious human rights abuses have been committed around the world using a wide range of weapons, arms, munitions and related materials. Hundreds of thousands of people have been killed, injured, raped and forced to flee from their homes as a result. Irresponsible transfers of conventional arms across the world contribute to the destruction of millions of lives and livelihoods.

Weaknesses and loopholes in existing national, regional and multilateral arms control mechanisms have enabled states and other parties to continue trading arms irresponsibly and with impunity. But now the absence of international standards to adequately regulate conventional arms trading and transfer can finally be addressed.

In July 2012, ATT negotiations at the United Nation closed without an agreement. In October 2009 Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced that the United States would seek a “strong and robust treaty that contains the highest possible, legally binding standards for the international transfer of conventional weapons.” The consequences of the poorly regulated trade in conventional arms are dramatically felt throughout the world, especially in developing countries where the constant flow of guns impedes sustainable development and facilitates serious abuses of human rights. It was therefore disappointing that the United States called for “more time” during the July Negotiations however; the Final Negotiations has now been confirmed and will take place on March 18th – 28th, 2013.

Key issues remain: We need to make sure that there are no attempts to change content or language that would severely weaken the treaty in the lead up to talks in 2013. We need to ensure the inclusion of ammunition in the text, which is already included in the U.S. Munitions List that require a license from the U.S. government before an export is authorized. With nearly twelve billion bullets manufactured every year—approximately two for every man, woman, and child on the planet—it is crucial that the international community establishes common standards for how countries export, import, and transfer these deadly items. An Arms Trade Treaty that does not include ammunition would do little to address many of the abuses that AI has documented in places such as the DRC, a war-torn country inundated with weapons and in which armed groups require more bullets, not necessarily more guns, to carry out serious abuses of human rights. Therefore, in order to protect lives and livelihoods in the DRC and elsewhere throughout the world, ammunition must be included in the scope of the treaty text.

Further, Amnesty International considers the inclusion of a robust human rights parameter as crucial to the treaty’s effectiveness. The treaty should require that states prohibit transfers of arms if there is a substantial risk that the arms would be used for serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. Such a measure would be consistent with U.S. domestic export controls as well as international human rights standards.

The United States already includes these standards in U.S. arms export controls and therefore, it should now take the opportunity to play a leading role in promoting these standards in the ATT negotiations. Furthermore, the mandate of the treaty negotiations prohibits it from interfering with domestic Constitutional protections to possess weapons. Therefore, the treaty will not have an impact on gun ownership and sales in the United States.

Amnesty International USA along with the global ATT coalition is continuing to fight for a robust Arms Trade Treaty. We will continue to put pressure on the United States Government to support efforts to establish a strong, human rights oriented treaty in March 2013.
A Global Arms Trade Treaty for the World

10 KILLER FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW

Before you get started on your activism, here are 10 killer facts you need to know about the international arms trade and its consequences:

1. Irresponsible arms transfers and abuse of arms contribute to the deaths of at least 500,000 people on average every year and facilitate the majority of the world’s human rights violations, including unlawful killings, sexual violence, recruitment of child soldiers, and forcing of millions of people to flee their homes.

2. Most of the arms trade is not subject to international standards. At present the only international standards that apply to the global arms trade are the UN Charter, including UN Security Council arms embargoes, and the UN Firearms Protocol.

3. About 60% of the human rights violations documented in a study by Amnesty International involved the use of small arms and light weapons.

4. 26 million people worldwide were internally displaced as a result of armed conflict at the end of 2008.

5. All of the top six countries of origin of refugees in 2008 are locations of armed conflict.

6. There are some 250,000 child soldiers in the world today, engaged in wars of adults making.

7. Child soldiers have been actively involved in armed conflict in government forces or non-state armed groups in 19 countries or territories since 2004.

8. The five permanent members of the Security Council - Russia, China, United States of America (USA), France, and the United Kingdom (UK) - collectively account for 88% of the global arms trade.

9. The United States is the major world arms exporter--racking up to 40% of sales.

10. One person every minute dies as a result of armed violence, with thousands more injured and abused every day.

Bonus: Did you know bananas have STONGER global trade regulations than weapons?
WORLD LEADERS HAVE THE POWER TO SET INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

Where does the United States stand?
The United States is by far the largest arms trading country in the world and accounts for more than 40% of global conventional arms transfers in terms of value. Its position on the ATT will be more influential than any other State. US weapon and ammunition laws and regulations are detailed and complex, including various provisions to protect human rights (Human rights and security assistance, 22 U.S.C. § 2304 (1994)) and numerous export control regulations cover ammunition and the full range of associated transactions). However, the US Administration can override human rights considerations for national security reasons. Also, the Pentagon’s global arms transfers are not subject to the State and Commerce Departments arms export regulations.

The US has a mixed record of suspending arms supplies on human rights grounds. For example, it has restricted arms transfers to Myanmar, China, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe in addition to countries subject to UN arms embargoes. However, it has continued to supply arms to other countries where there is a substantial risk that the arms could be used to commit of facilitate serious human rights violations. As the main arms supplier to Egypt, the US authorized the sale of small arms, millions of rounds of ammunition and riot control chemical agents despite the security forces violent crackdown on protesters.

If the US is truly committed to human rights it must ensure that the ATT contains rigorous assessments of the risks of serious violations of international human rights law.

The Influential “Big Six”
The most influential countries that will affect the outcome of the ATT are United States, Russia, China, France, UK, and Germany. US officials especially cite the need to placate China and Russia so they will agree to the ATT text. Although there have been many discussions about the content of a treaty, a draft text has been formally proposed. Only after the text has been formally decided upon in 2013 will it be opened for ratification by individual nation-states.

CHINA’S fast growing economy and arms trade makes it a major player in the negotiation of an Arms Trade Treaty but its government fails to publish reliable arms transfer data. Many of the recipients of China’s arms supplies over the past decade have been developing countries with poor human rights records. For example, China continues to supply significant volumes of small arms ammunition to Sudan which has been used in Darfur by security forces and government backed militia groups. China is eager to develop more sophisticated defense technologies from advanced economies and wants the EU and US arms embargoes ended.

Country position towards the ATT: China is the only significant arms exporting power that has not entered into any multilateral agreement which sets out criteria, including respect for human rights, to guide arms export licensing decisions, and this is reflected in its cautious approach to the ATT. Chinese diplomats have also wanted to narrow the scope of the Treaty, excluding small arms and light weapons, and also government-to-government transfers. China’s previous arms control negotiation tactics indicate that it will quietly try and water down text and then introduce major objections at the last moment.

RUSSIA is the second largest trading country in the world and has major influence on the ATT. Main customers have included India, Syria, Algeria, Myanmar, Venezuela and many African states. However its arms industry has been falling behind in key technologies and large customers, so it is seeking sophisticated partners and new markets for many products.

Country position towards the ATT: Russian diplomats have indicated that the Russian government wants the ATT to exclude binding rules on international human rights law, IHL and socio-economic development as these would be interpreted ideologically, but are comfortable with a wide definition of the scope for the Treaty covering all types of conventional arms as in the Munitions List of the Wassenaar Arrangement. The Russian delegation on the ATT has met AI three times at the UN.
AI DEMANDS HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTIONS

It is critical that the Treaty contains the highest possible common standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms. This is essential to help prevent serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

The likelihood of an international arms transfer being used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international law must be rigorously assessed and, where the risk is substantial, the transfer must not be authorized. Risk analysis should also examine the likelihood of any foreseeable events to prevent such future violations.

The Treaty must include strong human rights parameters States must ensure that an international transfer of conventional arms will not be permitted where there is substantial risk that those arms are likely to be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international human rights law or international humanitarian law. An effective rigorous assessment of each arms transfer license application must first be undertaken to determine the risk.

The Treaty must apply to all types and components of conventional arms States must define the scope of conventional arms to include all weaponry, munitions, armaments and related articles used for potentially lethal force in military and law enforcement operations, as well as any parts, components, accessories, machines, technologies and technical expertise for making, developing and maintaining those articles.

Implementation of the Treaty must be robust and enforceable States should agree standards for full, clear implementation of the Treaty, including national authorization and licensing systems, and criminal and administrative sanctions supported by public reporting and transparency, as well as an effective mechanism to monitor compliance.

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE & THE ARMS TRADE TREATY!

The arms trade has specific gender dimensions and direct links to discrimination and gender-based violence. Emboldened by weapons, power and status, both State and non-State armed groups often perpetrate gender-based violence, disproportionately affecting women with impunity. This has far-reaching implications for efforts to consolidate peace, security, gender equality and secure development.

The draft text as it currently exists covers “those activities of the international trade in conventional arms” and imposes certain specific obligations on State Parties to protect human rights when considering such transfers, including the obligation to not authorize an export where there is an overriding risk the proposed export could be used to commit or facilitate a serious violation of IHL or international human rights law.

During the negotiations, Amnesty International and its partners, IANSA Women’s Network and Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WiLPF) rigorously advocated that the ATT should recognize the specific impact of irresponsible international arms transfers on women and girls and include a criterion to prevent arms transfers where there is a substantial risk the arms are likely to be used to perpetrate or facilitate acts of gender-based violence, including rape and other forms of sexual violence.

The draft treaty text also includes a criterion on gender-based violence in the national risk assessment process. This inclusion of the criterion currently in the draft treaty text is an achievement for Amnesty International and our partners.
However, the operative words in the draft treaty are still weak. Amnesty International and its partners will have to continue to build political support for the strongest possible rule in the ATT to prevent international arms transfers being used for gender based violence.

Before the March 2013 ATT Conference, when the current draft text will be re-opened for negotiation, Amnesty International wants to generate sufficient changes in political will to strengthen the text by advocating for an alternative wording.

**HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?**

We need the **US government to make a top level commitment** to an effective ATT. Help us deliver a clear message to the US Government that the ATT must ensure that international arms trade and transfers don't contribute to serious violations of international human rights. The ATT must also include ammunition if it is to help prevent atrocities.

We need your help. Join Amnesty International in collecting petition signatures to secure the US’ commitment to secure human rights in the upcoming Arms Trade Treaty.

Help us tell the world:

**Sign the Petition!**

We will continue to collect signatures at [www.clickboom.org](http://www.clickboom.org) to urge the US Government to advocate for a robust Arms Trade Treaty. Once you sign the petition it’s important that you share it with your friends and family on Facebook and Twitter. The more sign the petition the stronger our chances are of getting a strong arms trade treaty

**Spread the Word- Using Images –Talk about it!**

Together you and other AI activists can help spread the word. Go to [www.amnestyusa.org/arms](http://www.amnestyusa.org/arms) and share images and infographics with friends and supporters. The more we educate the public about the impact the arms trade treaty has on our world, the more likely people are to sign the petition.

**Write about the ATT!** Do you have a blog or a twitter account with lots of followers? Do you know a prominent blogger with lots of followers? Whether you have a blog or twitter account or know someone who does, writing about the importance of the upcoming arms trade negotiations is a great way to share information and educate the public. Need a blog example? Check out Suzanne Nossel’s blog on the July negotiations: [http://blog.amnestyusa.org/arms-trade/us-spoils-arms-trade-talks-for-now-but-fight-goes-on/](http://blog.amnestyusa.org/arms-trade/us-spoils-arms-trade-talks-for-now-but-fight-goes-on/)

Letters to the Editor: Write Letters to the editor of your local papers about the need for a strong arms trade treaty and join AIUSA’s efforts to put an end to the misinformation about that the Arms Trade Treaty being spread by opposing groups like the NRA. For more information on the spread of *Misinformation on the ATT* contact the Campaign at [tmcharris@aiusa.org](mailto:tmcharris@aiusa.org)

**Contact your Senator!**

Contact your Legislative Coordinator or the Campaign ([armstrade@aiusa.org](mailto:armstrade@aiusa.org)) and find out if your Senator has taken a position on the Arms Trade Treaty. Educate them and apply grassroots pressure to ensure that they support the United States Government in advocating for a global arms treaty that helps prevent wide spread killings, rape, human suffering caused by the poorly regulated flow of arms throughout the world.
the Postcard Action and send a post card to your Senator on ATT. For postcards please contact your Field Organizer or the campaign!

Tell the NRA Leadership to Stand Down on ATT!
The NRA Leadership has continued to oppose the Arms Trade Treaty by, spreading misinformation about the Treaty’s impact on second amendment rights. In fact, the ATT has no bearing on the Second Amendment. In their 2008 report, the Group of Government Experts recommended against including domestic gun ownership within the treaty. The GGE’s recommendations are reflected in the ATT text drafted in July 2012, which reaffirms “the sovereign right and responsibility of any State to regulate and control transfers of conventional arms that take place exclusively within its territory, pursuant to its own legal or constitutional systems.”
Please see the issue brief for more info: http://www.amnestyusa.org/pdfs/ATT_IssueBriefDecember2012.pdf
To help tell the NRA to stop their lies about ATT please go to: www.amnestyusa.org/arms

In your Local Community
Organizing teach-ins, rallies or debates can be powerful ways to gather community members together to learn more about the need for a global treaty on conventional arms. Don’t forget to bring printed petition forms or an electronic notebook to get your event participants to take action before the event finishes.
Need ideas? Contact your field organizer at 1-800-REGIONS. Need materials? Have questions? Email campaigns at armstrade@aiusa.org or download materials at www.aiusa.org/arms

Go Bananas!
On June 27 Amnesty International USA went BANANAS in New York City’s Time Square to kick of the Arms Trade Treaty Campaign to bring attention to the fact that weapons have weaker global trade regulations than bananas. How do you go bananas? Put stickers on or write directly on bananas “Weapons have weaker global trade regulations than bananas” and either distribute or show them to people to get their attention. Then educate them on why we need an Arms Trade Treaty! For more information on how to go bananas, contact armstrade@aiusa.org!

Too see Russell Brand and Amnesty International USA go Bananas go to: www.aiusa.org/arms

***petition on last page***
Every year, the global trade in conventional arms carries an enormous human cost. Serious human rights abuses have been committed around the world using a wide range of weapons, arms, munitions and related materials. Hundreds of thousands of people have been killed, injured, raped and forced to flee from their homes as a result. Irresponsible transfers of conventional arms across the world contribute to the destruction of millions of lives and livelihoods. **The world needs a strong Arms Trade Treaty that will prevent arms transfers if they are likely to contribute directly to serious human rights abuses.**

On March 18 - 28, 2013 world leaders will have a Final Conference to negotiate the first ever treaty that will establish a mechanism to help prevent weapons from ending up in the hands of tyrants and child soldiers. The time to act is now. The Obama Administration bears a heavy responsibility to lead efforts in establishing a strong; human rights orientated treaty --- during the negotiation.

**Tell President Barack Obama that the world needs a Robust Arms Trade Treaty NOW. Take Action!**

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**Please Note:** Send to: Amnesty International USA: 5 Penn Plaza, 16th Floor, New York, NY 10001